2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



niques to such groups has raised some new problems in method and interpretation. 121

The customary discussion of these new problems includes questions concerning the appropriateness of delineating a small rural village as the unit for observation when, as in Latin America and in Europe, such villages may not be economically, socially, politically, or culturally isolated from the larger societies of which they are a part. Awareness of this problem has led to special emphasis on the analysis of types of association between the territorially based group which is the main focus of the study, and similar neighboring communities, towns, and cities, and also on the analysis of the way in which national economic, religious, educational, and political institutions impinge on the life of the small unit. Such information and discussion are inherent parts of this study.

Another significant question is the extent to which the village chosen can be considered typical either of similar neighboring communities or of the culture of the entire nation, or of both. When national cultures cover large areas of varied terrain and have huge populations distributed in villages, towns, and cities, it is likely that there will be some regional and community variation in culture and social structure. It is therefore sensible to ask whether in describing the ways of life in the Greek village of Vasilika one also succeeds in describing the essential culture of other farm settlements and the values and attitudes of all Greeks now living in Greece. When we give lectures on Vasilika either to professional or to lay groups, someone always asks, "How did you choose your village?"

Anthropologists have concerned themselves with the methods of choosing communities for study in such a way as to guarantee some degree of representativeness. One solution to the problem has been to compare certain features of the village with the numerical and percentage distribution of those features in the nation as a whole. One might compare the age and sex distribution of the village population with that of the entire nation, or the age at marriage, or the size of families, or the proportion of farmers to shepherds, or the average real income, and the like, and conclude that if the village resembled the nation in these respects, it had some claim to representativeness.

Another solution, the one used in this study, is to choose a settlement which seems from my reading, my observation, and my discussion with Greeks to have frequently recurring features of rural villages, even if such features are not necessarily characteristic of all such settlements. One hopes that intensive study of such a community will be a contribution to the understanding of rural culture and social structure in the nation, and that some values and attitudes of the people observed will be shared by the total population. The discovery of which of the values and attitudes are shared and the more general question of typicality can be postponed until similar studies are done of rural communities in different regions and of town and urban populations of different occupations and social positions (cf. Sanders 1962).

We chose Vasilika in Boeotia for special study both because it exhibits some of the features just mentioned, and also because it is suitable for the application of anthropological field work techniques. Its common Greek plains village 121 105

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121 105 features include the compact arrangement of its houses, with the fields surrounding them, its accessibility to paved roads, its mixed subsistence and cash crop farming, and the existence within the village of a school, two coffeehouses and stores, several church structures, and a resident priest. In a negative sense, one of Vasilika's features is that there is nothing unusual in its history or present situation which would markedly differentiate it from other farming villages of the region. It has never been the subject of any special agricultural extension campaigns, none of the villagers have wealthy overseas relatives interested in improving the village as a whole, and it is outside the orbit of the tourist. If there is anything unusual about the village, it was the arrival of several shepherd families in 1950 and their subsequent political and social integration into the community.

[162] Vasilika is suitable from the standpoint of field work techniques for several reasons. First, since it has a population of only 216, two field workers could expect to know everyone in the community. Second, the speech of the [197] inhabitants is a form of Greek with only minor dialectic variations from the [122] Athenian demotic form (see glossary) that we had studied in preparation for our work. And third, one of the families in the village was willing to have us [123] live in the upper story of their house, which is located close to the center of the village.

121 Vasilika's way of life must be understood as completely representative only of itself, but in some of its general features it has most in common with [184] other farming villages on the Boeotian plain. The degree to which the habits, values, and attitudes of the villagers resemble those of other Greeks, at this stage of our knowledge, must remain on the level of impressions. As a rural [171] settlement, however, Vasilika has many features in common with farming villages that are segments of old national cultures in other parts of the world. The culture of the village is assuredly not in all its aspects a uniquely Greek phenomenon. Students of similar villages in other parts of Europe, the Near East, Latin America, and Asia will find many features of the culture and social structure of Vasilika familiar to them. But even these specialists will find a goodly number of features and especially of combinations of features that are entirely unfamiliar, for they are features that are uniquely Hellenic.

Two problems of particular relevance to anthropological studies of the rural populations of modern nations have been considered: the usefulness of choosing a rural settlement as the unit of observation, together with the new lines of investigation such a choice requires; and the selection of a particular settlement for study. These problems present their difficulties, but anthropologists working in old national cultures have some advantages; they can consult the works of other specialists. In Greece, for example, an anthropologist need not act as his own historian, economist, political scientist, psychologist, and sociologist. Folklorists have long been collecting oral literature and folk costumes from all sections of the country. Greeks and non-Greeks alike have produced many varied reports on Greek life and culture, both ancient and modern. Neither does an anthropologist working in Greece have to act as a geographer or agrono-

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4. The different organizations are a part of the people. Nothing is introduced by outsiders nor advocated by any one person, but through centuries have become an accepted principle of their community life to watch their community improve from all around.

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Conclusions to be drawn from the village of Megali Vrisi.

1. The new village has two distinct type of people with their pattern of customs.

2. The Government's attempt to mould the customs of these groups into one may face difficulties at the beginning.

3. Both groups semi-primitive in the sense of having:

a. Patriarchal pattern type of family.
b. Father having the buying and selling
c. Both women and children doing farm work, unending toil of women.
d. Education or training rests with the grandparents.
e. Agriculture for making a living
/103/ f. Common land and pasture; no ownership.
g. Lack of knowledge of fertilizers.
h. Magic strongly believed by both groups.
i. Purpose of marriage was to have the labor of women and for raising children.
j. Land divided in many patches and scattered.
k. The "Gerousia" as the only powerful and effective group in community government.
l. Religion of paganistic type.
m. Business in its primitive form of exchanging goods.
n. Mutual aid very characteristic.

The low cash income, backward farm techniques, with too much emphasis on the subsidized wheat crop, poor housing and household equipment, inadequately balanced diet, disregard of proper sanitation and other preventive measures against disease, inadequate medical attention, absence of recreational opportunities, impractical religion, slow educational processes without vital

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relations to the life of the people, and burdensome work of wives and children, are conditions which are suggestive of planning objectives.

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# GREECE[1]

The culture of the Greeks is here presented as an integrated whole. The Greeks have been selected out of the European nations now engaged in introducing technical change, because they represent a unique case. They have the most ancient civilization of the European continent, yet their technical development at present is one of the lowest. The history of their industries and factories goes back more than 2,500 years; yet they now resist industrialization. They are European, yet they look toward the Middle East and share a number of attitudes with the people of this area. They are Christians but with a special kind of Christianity, highly ritualized and impersonal, and incorporating much of local origin.

Individualism is prized and rampant; yet there is no atomization. Self-esteem is paramount, and rests on freedom and self-dependence; yet Greeks do not seek freedom from the family, and do not lose self-esteem when they are dependent on the family. They have their own unique individualism. They are highly co-operative, but the basis and formulation of their co-operative activity are different from those of the Western European nations.

[1] The study of Greek culture is based largely on interviews, correspondence, and memoranda, conducted and prepared in the autumn and winter of 1950-51. Newspapers and magazines of this time were also consulted. Two Maternal and Child Care Manuals of recent years, several collections of folk songs, and a popular humorous work were intensively analysed. Accounts by people engaged in introducing change were consulted. The writer, herself a Greek by birth and upbringing, has depended also on her own firsthand experience of the culture. The manuscript was submitted to two Greeks for comment and criticism.